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LUCKY DRAGONNPIC/CSD 451/65  
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DIEN BIEN PHU  
NORTH VIETNAM  
2123N 10301E

1. DIEN BIEN PHU, WHICH LITERALLY TRANSLATES "BIG ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER ON THE FRONTIER", WAS LAID WASTE IN TURN BY THE CHINESE, THE SIAMESE, THE MEOS, AND THE THAIS, AND WAS THE SCENE OF THE DECISIVE BATTLE OF THE FRENCH-INDOCHINA WAR WHICH ENDED ON 07 MAY 1954. THE WAR OFFICIALLY ENDED ON 20 JULY 1954.

2. MISSION LUCKY DRAGON  REVEALS DIEN BIEN PHU AS IT EXISTED IN NOVEMBER OF 1964. OUTLINED ON THE PHOTOGRAPHY ARE EIGHT OF THE NINE ORIGINAL FRENCH UNION POSITIONS -- "DOMINIQUE", "ELIANE", "CLAUDINE", "ISABELLE" (NOT SHOWN ON GRAPHIC), "FRANCOISE", "HUGUETTE" (SITE OF THE AIRFIELD BUILT BY THE JAPANESE DURING WORLD WAR II AND LOCATION OF THE BUNKER OF FORTRESS COMMANDANT GENERAL DE CASTRIES), "BEATRICE", "GABRIELLE", AND "ANNE-MARIE". THE DEFENDING FORCES INCLUDED VIETNAMESE, FOREIGN LEGIONNAIRES, MAINLAND FRENCHMEN, ALGERIANS, MOROCCANS, AND OTHER INDOCHINESE.

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GROUP 1  
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3. "GABRIELLE" AND "BEATRICE", THE TWO HIGHEST FRENCH POSITIONS (491 METERS AND 509 METERS RESPECTIVELY), WERE LOST ON 14 MARCH WITHIN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AFTER THE ACTUAL BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE. THIS GAVE THE VIET MINH BATTERIES A CONTINUOUS VIEW OF ALL THE FRENCH POSITIONS, AND THE AIRFIELD (UPON WHOSE CONTINUOUS USE THE SUCCESS OF THE BATTLE HINGED) BECAME USELESS WITHIN A FEW DAYS. ON 18 MARCH, STRONG-POINT "ANNE-MARIE", WHICH DEFENDED THE APPROACHES TO THE AIRFIELD, HAD TO BE ABANDONED; THE AIRFIELD WAS NOW IN FULL VIEW OF THE ENEMY GUNNERS.

4. THE MONUMENT OBSERVED AT "BEATRICE" WAS ERECTED IN MEMORY OF PHAM DINH GIOT, A VIET MINH WHO REPORTEDLY THREW HIMSELF ON THE EMBRASURE OF A BLOCKHOUSE TO ALLOW AN ASSAULT WAVE TO ADVANCE. A SECOND MONUMENT TO THE FALLEN VIET MINH WAS BUILT AT "ELIANE". THE FORMER FRENCH CEMETERIES OF "ISABELLE" AND "CLAUDINE" ARE NOW REPORTEDLY EITHER UNDER CULTIVATION OR UNDER BRUSH.

5. COLLATERAL SOURCES: STREET WITHOUT JOY, INSURGENCY IN INDOCHINA, 1946-63 (BERNARD B. FALL); THE BATTLE OF DIENBIENPHU (JULES ROY); CIA OVERT AND CLANDESTINE PHOTOS.

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